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ABSTRACT

This book suggests an approach to education that includes students' family members as valuable citizens in a community of learners which also includes students, teachers, and other members of the community at large. Part 1 examines current trends in parental involvement and the hidden assumptions on which many such programs are based. It is argued that many schools and teachers thwart their own efforts at parental involvement by demanding that any communication with parents must take place entirely on the teacher's or school's terms, despite the proliferating body of recent research suggesting that effective education in a diverse society benefits from a broadening of the traditional boundaries around school services. Part 2 explores the role of the classroom teacher in developing a partnership with families and the community within the context of transformative education. Central to this role are participatory research, dialogue, and co-authorship of family books, all of which serve to validate the parent and community voice while integrating home and school contexts. Co-authorship of family books is suggested as a way to enable parents to critically analyze experiences from their own literacy development, their present educational relationship to their children, and their visions for a home and school partnership. Part 3 presents findings from a participatory research project conducted with first-grade parents in a multicultural, multilingual public school setting. In Part 4 suggestions are provided for teachers interested in initiating similar projects with their own classes, followed by Part 5 which offers examples of other programs that engage families and communities in collective education. (Contains 80 references.) (PB)

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